



Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School

Learning With an Environmental Focus

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Good evening,

I have been working in NHPS for 10 years. In the past two years the positive changes that I have seen in the school lunch program have been a joy to witness. Students are experiencing not only delicious healthy alternatives to their daily eating habits, but it is also opening up avenues of inquiry that aid in our educational programming. For example, just this past week students were served "American Chop Suey" and "Curried Chicken Thighs." Telling students what is for lunch is becoming not only a healthy conversation, but a multicultural conversation as well.

With that said Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School is an inter-district magnet school which serves students from diverse backgrounds, and while it is true that for some their school meals are their only meals, for others at Barnard the school meal constitutes as one of the only healthy meals they eat on a daily basis. In today's society time is of the essences for a lot of our working families. Many working families do not have time to vary what their children eat let alone check the packaging to ensure it is healthy. The school lunch program is working to help limit the amount of processed foods our children are eating and increase the amount of whole grains in our student's diets.

Part of our environmental program is a flourishing school garden and we are constantly looking for ways to incorporate what we grow into our school lunches. Just last year we were able to serve 500 students coleslaw made from cabbage grown in our garden. We will continue this endeavor, but it would be a disservice to our school community to force our food services department to base what they serve to our students solely on the price. The students would be missing out, and let me tell you the days when the students are served chicken on the bone are among the quietest in the cafeteria.